

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Executive Board Sub Committee on Thursday, 18 June 2009 in the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chairman), Harris and Nelson

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Bennett, R. Dart, L. Derbyshire and G. Fitzpatrick and M. Reaney.

Also in attendance:

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE SUB-COMMITTEE

Action

ES125 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2009 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

ES126 DISCRETIONARY NON DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy requesting Members to consider four applications for discretionary non-domestic rate relief, under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

The report advised that under the provisions of Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988m the Authority is allowed to grant discretionary rate relief to organisations that are either a charity or a non-profit making organisations.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Under the provisions of Section 47, Local Government Finance Act 1988, discretionary rate relief be granted to the3 following organisation at the percentage indicated, for

the period from 1 April 2009 or the commencement of liability, whichever is the later, to 31 March 2013; and

Halton Carers' Centre Ltd
20%

Halton Pentecostal Church Charity
20%

Shetland Rescue Horse and Pony Sanctuary
20%

Warrington Disability Partnership
20%;

- (2) In respect of the following organisations, it is also recommended that they should be granted discretionary rate relief for the backdated element of the charge:

Halton Carers' Centre Ltd
20%.

ES127 OUTTURN REPORT 2008/09

The Board considered a report which reported the final revenue and capital spending position for 2008/09.

The report advised that the final accounts for 2008/09 were now complete and the revenue spending position for each Directorate, subject to external audit was set out in the Appendix to the report.

It was noted that as set out in the Budget Strategy, the planned overall underspend of £2m had been successfully achieved and had been transferred to the Invest to Save Fund to support efficiency measures.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

ES128 AWARD OF THE HBC BRIDGE MAINTENANCE PARTNERSHIP CONTRACT TO BALVAC LTD

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which outlined the circumstances of the award of the HBC Bridge Maintenance Partnership Contract to Balvac Ltd following the collapse of Wrekin Construction Company Ltd.

The report advised that the financial viability of Wrekin had been accepted based upon information returned by the

Council's independent Equifax credit intelligence service both in August 2008 (when shortlisting) and December 2008 (before award in January 2009). On both occasions a suggested contract limit of £5m was reported which was greater than the estimated maximum annual works budget of approximately £4m.

Following Strategic Director, Environment approval of their appointment, Wrekin were issued a letter on 13 January 2009 which authorised commencement of preparatory, procurement and mobilisation activities in advance of the formal Contract being established, subject to reimbursement should the Council eventually decide not to enter into a contract with them.

On 10 March 2009, the Council was made aware that Wrekin had entered into Administration. At that point the Contract was still in a preliminary stage with procedure, process and programme being agreed. Wrekin had not commenced any work on site nor established any site facilities. They had not placed any subcontracts nor purchased plant equipment or materials required for our Contract. Wrekin had also not received any payment from HBC in connection with the Bridge Maintenance Partnership Contract.

The Council entered into correspondence with Ernst & Young (who had been appointed as Administrator) and their specialist advisors. As a result, Strategic Director approval was granted for award of the Bridge Maintenance Partnership Contract to Balvac Ltd whose tender submission was a close second to that of Wrekin,

Balvac are part of the Balfour Beatty Group of companies and Balfour Beatty have forwarded a Parent Company Guarantee to increase client confidence as regards Balvac's ability to execute the Contract.

On 31 March 2009m Balvac had been issued with a letter authorising commencement of preparatory, procurement and mobilisation activities in advance of the formal Contract being established.

RESOLVED: That the circumstances of the award of the HBC Bridge Maintenance Partnership to Balvac Ltd be noted.

PROCUREMENT OF SPECIALIST HIGHWAYS GOODS AND SERVICES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which requested approval to waive Standing Orders to enable procurement of specialist highways goods and services where it had been proven impossible to seek acceptable alternative quotations.

The report advised that the advance procurement and secure storage of SJB hanger cables and components was a contingency measure which would reduce the potential of a prolonged long term closure of the bridge in the event of damage to the bridge structure.

The report also advised that the issue of a hanger being damaged has serious implications for the integrity of the structure of the Silver Jubilee Bridge that in conjunction with the framework consultants Mott MacDonald, it was decided to prepare in advance a fully certified and independently checked design for a method of replacing a hanger cable. Having an 'an the shelf' would reduce the downtime associated with bringing the bridge back into service should there be a need to replace a hanger cable.

It was noted that in conjunction with Mott MacDonald, the Authority had approached six different specialist cable suppliers in Italy, Germany, France and the United Kingdom and the only company who confirmed their ability to satisfy the specification requirements were Bridon Structural Systems of Doncaster, UK. Bridon were the manufacturers of the original hanger cable assemblies in the late 1950's.

It was also noted that the minimum run Bridon's mill would produce is 250m and because there are two different diameters of cable the Council would need two coils of 250m each, Bridon have quoted £129,100 for supply and delivery of two 250m drums of galvanized locked coil rope cable and two of each upper and lower cable anchorage assemblies. This is less than the EU financial threshold for procurement of supplies so advertising for expression of interest through OJEU would not be required.

RESOLVED: That Standing Orders be waived to allow procurement of Silver Jubilee Bridge replacement hanger cable and components from Bridon Structural Systems Ltd.

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which sought authority for Halton Borough Council to become the managing agent for the North West Development Agency Regional Enterprise Programme for Halton.

The Board was advised that in the two years since Enterprising Halton had been launched the programme had dealt with 890 start-up enquiries, assisted 172 new business start-ups which had created an additional 134 jobs over and above the business owners. Fifteen new businesses had also registered for VAT.

RESOLVED: That Authority be given for Halton Borough Council to become the managing agent for the North West Development Agency Business Start Up programme within Halton.

MINUTES ISSUED: 23 June 2009

CALL IN: 1 July 2009

Any matter decided by the Executive Board Sub Committee may be called in no later than 1 July 2009.

Meeting ended at 10.40 a.m.